



April 18, 2023

The Honorable Bruce Westerman
Chairman
House Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Raul Grijalva
Ranking Member
House Committee on Natural Resources
1329 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Westerman and Ranking Member Grijalva:

National Audubon Society strongly opposes H.J. Res. 29, the Congressional Review Act (CRA) resolution that would rescind the Endangered Species Act (ESA) listing of the Lesser Prairie-Chicken. Further, Audubon opposes all CRA resolutions that would undermine science-based decision making and preclude the opportunity to provide needed protections for species and critical habitat, such as H.J. Res. 46 and H.J. Res 49.

The Lesser Prairie-Chicken is one of the most imperiled bird species in the nation. Populations have fallen 97 percent since the 1960s, and recent numbers are approaching historic lows, which saw a 20 percent drop in just one year between 2021 and 2022. These critically-low numbers put the population at high risk of extinction, including from events such as drought or harsh winters.

Listing this species in 2022 was the right and necessary decision. Protections were first proposed in 1995, and efforts in recent decades have failed to recover the species to date. We need the full, robust conservation toolkit now to recover this species, as the ESA intended, and it is critical to protect and conserve the last, best places that will allow the species to survive.

H.J. Res. 29 would not only rescind protections and put the continued existence of this species at severe risk, it would prevent any rule that is “substantially the same” in the future, which would likely doom this species to extinction.

We also have significant concerns about H.J. Res 46 and H.J. Res 49, which would interfere with science-based rulemakings on the ESA. In particular, H.J. Res. 46 would overturn a rule that rescinds a rulemaking that restricts the ability to designate critical habitat that could support species through restoration and from climate change impacts.

Thank you for your consideration of our views, and let us know if there any questions.

Sincerely,

Jesse Walls
Sr. Dir. Government Affairs
National Audubon Society